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# child welfare

Group Work in a  
Merged Institution

Values, Assumptions and  
Concepts Underlying the Re-  
vised Standards for Foster  
Family Care Service

Reaccreditation—  
What It Means to an Agency  
A Community Protective Program  
Practices in Selecting  
Adoptive Parents  
Highlights from the  
League's Salary Survey

May 1959

# CHILD WELFARE

JOURNAL OF THE  
CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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Editorial and general office: 345 E. 46th Street, N.Y. 17, N.Y.  
Published monthly except August and September by the

Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

Annual Subscription, \$4.00

3-Year Subscription, \$10.00

Individual Copies, 45 cents

Student Rates—Annual Subscription, \$2.75

2-Year Student Subscription, \$5.00

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 52-4649

VOL. XXXVIII

No. 5

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# GROUP WORK IN A MERGED INSTITUTION

**Samuel P. Berman**

Executive Director  
Edgewood Children's Center  
Webster Groves, Missouri

*The use of group work in a residential treatment center, and its specific application to a recently merged agency.*

SOCIAL group work has contributed to various aspects of institutional care of children. Our group work program was organized around a club program of an activity-interview nature, with much use of arts and crafts and recreational outlets, but was geared to improving the adjustment of individuals within a group living structure. Mastery of skills and the development of wholesome interpersonal relationships were major objectives. The benefits included:

- Development of group identity
- Group solidarity
- Adjustment to the institution
- Adjustment to current situations
- Preparation for changes within the institution—e.g. admissions, discharges and staff turnover

The development of this group work program occurred as part of the reorganization which followed the merger of the Edgewood Children's Center with the Forest Park Children's Center. The merger, recommended by the Social Planning Council of St. Louis, involved moving the children into the physical plant of Edgewood. The new agency, a residential treatment center, is geared to serve between eighteen and twenty pre-adolescent boys and girls in its modern streamlined cottage system. In addition, it provides many diagnostic studies, services for parents of children in care and an important after-care follow-up service. It has a school on the grounds, and also makes use of the public school system. Children who are severely disturbed and require treatment in an open residential setting are accepted for care. The children are all of average intelligence; an IQ of 90 is considered the minimum. None have severe organic damage nor severe physical handicaps. Most are acting out, aggressive, hostile or impulse-driven youngsters. Diagnostically some are neurotic,

have primary behavior disorders or character disorders. A few are pre-psychotic.

## **Problems of Readjustment**

Because of the many anxieties attendant on such a move, the merger brought with it many problems of readjustment. Not the least of these was the question of the identity of the agency. In effect it was a new agency, but it could not sever itself from the past. The board of directors and the staff experienced some confusion about their identification. Most seriously affected by this confusion was, of course, the client group. Brought together under a new program, the children suffered a disturbance in their earlier status and identity.

During the reorganization the children's inability to establish new group ties and identity became apparent. They reacted in a highly self-centered manner rather than in relation to group loyalties, group stratification and group support. They clung to group loyalties of the past and were rivalrous with the children from the other group. Despite this disruption some children clung to each other and resisted relating to the staff. There were some pairing off by individuals, some cliques and some gang formations. Such groupings served constructive purpose. The staff experienced their own pressures concerning the merger, such as in connection with the question of whether the agency would be a permissive one, or one involving firm kindness to enable group solidarity. Staff turnover created additional problems. The closing of intake by both agencies just before merger, and within Edgewood following the merger, aroused anxiety in the children about the fact that the center was discharging but not admitting any children.

In the summer of 1957 reorganization of the agency was begun. It required some very assertive action geared to the recognition of the new identity of the agency. Thus for example, the board of directors drew up a new intake policy and authorized the opening of intake. It also established revised personnel policies, new budgetary arrangements, and a new plan for the orientation and training of board members. Committees of the board were appointed to carry out and report on specific assignments. This involved the use of group process in a goal-directed manner.

Similarly the staff members, in addition to individual supervision, were provided with opportunities for planned group meetings, conferences, seminars and the like with some clear-cut spelling out of responsibilities, programs, philosophies, and with the elicitation of their suggestions and recommendations about program development. This group process was also observed in part in connection with the parents of children in care. A special manual was prepared for parents and given to them at a group orientation session. At that time they were familiarized with the changes in the agency staff and program. They were reassured about the responsibilities the agency had toward them and the staff's expectations concerning parental cooperation. Soon thereafter, positive feeling for the new program at Edgewood Children's Center became observable.

### ***Group Work Program for Children***

However, despite their ability to respond to the new program, the children in the two cottages continued to demonstrate a lack of group feeling—a lack of identification within a group, a lack of the "we" feeling we had hoped for. To help with this, a planned group work program was introduced as an essential part of the treatment.

It was recognized that children in a treatment center such as Edgewood generally have great difficulty in making group adjustments in the community. Most of the children were the "acting out," impulsive, de-

structive, hostile, angry youngsters who had had difficulty in getting along in groups. On the other hand the shy, inhibited, depressed child had also demonstrated difficulty in making satisfactory adjustments at school, in the neighborhood, within the family, in play groups and in other group settings. The severe emotional deprivation and the fear of losing affection and attention created problems for children within the group living institution itself. The treatment center provided highly individualized care for each child, and much individual attention from the caseworker, the teacher, the houseparents, the psychiatric consultants, psychologist and others.

At this particular time a specialized group experience was needed. It would involve a consciously planned use of small groups in order to provide the children with a therapeutic group experience. It would be conducted with the aid of someone specially trained in social group work. The assistance of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work was provided, and the Director of Edgewood, who had been responsible for the group work program at the Forest Park Children's Center, offered to supervise a student and to plan integration of the group work service within the total treatment program.

The agency would have much preferred to employ a fully qualified, experienced group worker, but was unable to do so because of financial limitations. Use of a student was considered an expedient and helpful way to demonstrate the potential value of such a program to the board of directors and to the United Fund. It did help convince the directors of the need to finance a group work position. At the same time, Edgewood was able to carry out its responsibility to train workers for this service. The agency thus provided the group work student with rather close supervision and consultation service.

### ***Organization of the Groups***

The group worker, who had had training at the university and field work experience

in settlement houses, quickly established three clubs in the institution. The children were advised that these were purely voluntary groups. While attendance was voluntary, the children were given the understanding that the success of the group depended upon their desire to participate and their enjoyment of the group experience. Shortly after the program had been initiated the groups were reduced to two, one for the boys and one for the girls. This group, or club, met twice weekly for one hour. As an expedient, the groups at first each included all the children in each cottage. Thus despite the age range of from eight to fifteen, all the boys in the cottage belonged to the boys' club. More recently three groups have been formed: the co-ed, juniors, ages six to nine; the older girls, ages ten to thirteen; and the older boys, ages ten to fourteen. Children were encouraged to join these voluntary groups on the basis of the psychiatric and casework recommendations. The child's current and anticipated ability to tolerate the group structure was considered. No child was refused membership, but occasionally a child withdrew or absented himself. Such behavior was studied in order to facilitate his group adjustment. Rarely did the group exclude a child because of his disruptive, anxiety-arousing behavior.

The groups were activity orientated but were of an activity-interview nature. That is, while making use of arts and crafts projects, planned trips, recreational activities, they still involved discussion of significant matters when opportunities presented themselves. Meetings took place in some area away from the cottages, in order to indicate to the children that this was to be their own clubhouse rather than an extension of the cottage routine. The atmosphere was much more permissive than it could be in the cottages. Cottage staff were not involved in the direct operation of the clubs, but were required to accompany the children to club sessions to help reduce the transitional confusion and excitement. When on rare occasions meetings did occur in the cottages, they

were not nearly so successful or harmonious as those held in the children's own meeting area.

### **Method and Goals**

The clubs were the private organizations of the children, but were guided by the adult group leader. With the leader's assistance, the groups provided opportunities for growth and development, and channels for mastery of activities and of social relations; they also helped children relate to and communicate with the adult leader and to function within the peer group.

The group worker had been given what amounted to prescriptions for care by the caseworkers and the psychiatrist. They indicated which child needed the experience of talking out some of his anxiety and negative feelings, and which one needed some help in learning to control impulsive behavior. The child with low self-esteem was helped to secure group praise and thus gain greater confidence.

The goal was always the building of a sense of belonging and of interdependence. The children developed greater tolerance of each others' personalities and problems. This included learning respect for the wishes and expectations of the group and learning to live in a democratic society. The group worker consciously sought to improve the children's personal adjustment. She also provided opportunity for them to imitate her and to identify with her. With such severely acting out children, she tried carefully to gear the introduction of limit setting and controls, while helping them to learn to extend their attention span and their frustration tolerance. The group did experience a decided shift in activity, running the gamut from chaos to group cohesiveness and cooperative play. At first, the club sessions indicated inability to make use of the materials and space, but gradually shifted to the point where children were able to play or be occupied side by side with other children, have some interaction with the leader, some sub-group formation, and finally some total

group interaction. This varied from time to time but gradually a group core evolved.

The methods were those of social group work, including for instance, participative planning by the children. The children were allowed to plan the program, the timing and the place with the worker, and to evaluate their meetings. The group worker worked closely with each child in a treatment-oriented manner, and at the same time remained aware of the need of the total group. The development of the child's relations to the worker and to the other group members led to modifications of symptoms and behavior. Satisfactions were experienced, group identity developed. Carry-over of success within the group to cottage groups and school was observed.

The group worker made reports to the director, to the caseworkers involved, and to the total staff. She participated in the weekly case conferences and staff meetings and received supervisory help from the faculty supervisor, the director and the psychiatric consultant. She had a weekly two-hour supervisory session with the director, and conferred with each of the caseworkers and the houseparents. The specific aims and methods of the group worker were interpreted and integrated with cottage life. She also presented her material to a Case Committee of the board of directors. Because of the general interest in this program, the agency invited executives and board members from other agencies to the case committee meeting. The group worker and her supervisor also presented reports to a graduate school class in psychiatric social work. One of the main advantages of this interpretative method concerning the role and use of social group work in an institution was that of the further in-service training received by the houseparents and other staff members. The houseparents especially benefited greatly from the sharing of information about this specialized experience.

The groups were particularly helpful in certain essential areas of institutional care. The following merit comment:

**1. The development of group identity:** Each group had some strong feelings about selecting a name, and used the name and motif (the Honeycombs and the Shamrocks) in some of their arts and crafts projects. Each group also set certain self-limiting rules of conduct, largely in order to guard against their own tendency towards impulsive acting-out. There developed feelings of unity and cohesiveness, and pride in their club room and in their club. They made curtains and painted furniture to brighten up the club room. There had been disagreement over the choice of names, but a name was finally accepted on the basis of majority rule.

The children themselves discussed the need for some guiding rules to take into account what they should do when a child ruined play materials, or hit another child. A group code of proper and acceptable behavior developed. A later club extended this into a written list of "don'ts" to which were added some more positive statements, such as the responsibility of a club member to help other members. The group also was able to come to an understanding about the importance of being punctual at meetings, and of cleaning the clubhouse before leaving in order to make it ready for the next group.

**2. Maintenance of group solidarity:** A dramatic example of a group acting in its own behalf when the members could not do so as individuals occurred in the Girl's Club.

One of the older girls who had become very tyrannical and abusive became too threatening to each of the members of the group and to the group itself. Her behavior had become bullying and physically dangerous to the point where she struck a child and the group leader. Despite their anxiety about the possibility that the child would seek revenge upon them, the children were able to temporarily exclude her from the club on the grounds that she had violated one of the main rules of the group—that members may not strike anyone except in self defense. The girl then attempted to seductively win her way back into the group, but the group held firm. She respected their decision, and at a subsequent meeting was re-instated, after promising to comply with group expectations.

**3. Adjustment to the institution itself:** This particularly important development was demonstrated repeatedly. The groups

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**4. Adjustment to the institution itself:** This particularly important development was demonstrated repeatedly. The groups

were able to release feelings associated with living in the institution, such as feelings about the various staff members and the program. At one session members of the Boys' Club, which had gotten off to a somewhat shaky start, were able to deal with their anger at the houseparents who had compelled a few reluctant boys to attend. The group worker helped the children talk about their feelings, and they went on to talk at some length about their anger at the excessive firmness of one of the houseparents. After considerable release of feelings some of the boys acknowledged that they did at times require some firmness, although at times it did not seem fair. But they recognized some of the benefit of firmness by the houseparent, particularly in light of some successes they had had with her help. It was agreed, however, that the justifiable complaint raised by the children would be discussed by the group worker with the houseparents, to make clear to them the nature of the group work program.

At a session of the Girls' Club, the girls warned one of their members about her use of curse words, stating that the housemother would be told and would be very annoyed. The children then spoke about the difference between the club program and that of the cottage. They expressed a disguised wish to have controls imposed upon their impulsive behavior.

**4. Adjustment to current or pending situations**, particularly as they throw light on the children's past experiences. The groups repeatedly reacted to issues current in the cottages or those anticipated, such as factors relating to school, activities at the institution, interaction with the social work staff. Sometimes the children's desire to scapegoat one another—to gain status by hurting someone, to displace their problems onto someone else—had to be dealt with within the group setting. At one session, the girls complained in a teasing fashion to the group worker that Jill was a naughty girl, that she had been discovered masturbating. They were eager to talk about the child's

situation. The group worker indicated that such discussions could not be held within the club. She said that personal problems would not be reviewed without the consent of the child involved; the group would have to respect the wishes and feelings of the individuals involved and not cause any embarrassment to them.

By contrast, when the children showed anxiety and much curiosity about the group worker's forthcoming marriage, she dealt with their anxiety about her abandoning them. The children were able to relate this to the distress of their past interaction with their mothers.

#### **5. Preparation of a group for the admission of a child:** A group setting is auspicious for this.

At one meeting of the Girls' Club, the four girls present had chosen to make some special stationery. While they were doing so the group worker said, "I hear that a new girl might be coming here." The group quickly conveyed to the worker the girl's name, what she looked like, when she would come for another pre-placement visit. The worker asked how they felt about having a new girl. May said very strongly, "I don't want her here." Kay agreed. Peg, however, said what she thought the worker wanted her to: "I think she seems nice, I'll be glad if she comes." The worker asked, "Why don't some of you think you want her to come?" May said, "It's nice with just five girls and six would spoil it all." Kay chimed in with a similar statement. May said in fact it was nice here with just four. Peg and Alice agreed. Alice said, "Yes, but that was different." All the children but Kay pressed on about how when Kay came everything got messed up.

The worker said she could understand some of their feelings. It was always hard to accept somebody new. Sometimes we thought we got cheated and therefore put all of these feelings into blaming someone else. The children discussed this for a while and the worker then added, "Just as you at times felt you disliked Kay very much there were also times when you feel good about her and are glad she is here." Gradually the group agreed. Kay said she felt sorry for the new girl, and was not going to be "as mean to her as they were to me." Peg said, "I won't be mean to her," and ultimately the rest of the group followed her lead.

When the new girl arrived, all the members accepted her into the group most graciously.

**6. Preparation for discharge:** A club is a very natural setting for discussing the anxiety of the children who are preparing to leave the agency. The worker suggested in each of the clubs that these children be invited to some special group sessions. Each of the five children came to two such meetings. They indicated great anxiety about the topic, and about the fact that they were meeting in a place other than their normal meeting room. Soon they were able to deal with how difficult it was for them to contemplate leaving Edgewood. They discussed what would be different about living elsewhere—either at home or in a foster home—including the probable advantages and their fears about the new place. They talked a bit about what they would like their new home to be like, and showed much concern about whether the parents or parent substitutes would be able to properly supervise them. The children recognized that others in the group shared this anxiety and needed reassurance, and that the institution would always be interested in their situation and continue to be of service to them.

These six points by no means constitute a complete list of the benefits accruing to the children from such a special therapeutically-oriented group experience. Each child benefited in a different way. The following is a record of Kay's group participation after she had been in a club for several months:

Kay seems to enjoy the club as another phase in her life in which she can be given something, such as club supplies. She also asks the worker each time about the activity scheduled and also makes some suggestions. She always covers this up by a negative approach, such as "I don't want to do this, or "Why do we have to do that." After complaining she usually begins the activity if given some support by the worker. She does have considerable artistic ability but is usually afraid of testing this out because of her chronic fear of failure. If she makes one little mistake she rips up her work, but she does start again. She often messes up with paints, using them impulsively. Her general picture in the group has changed considerably. She seems to be enjoying herself much more. Kay is no longer as much a scapegoat as she was earlier in the sessions. Since other new members have been admitted, the scapegoating has lessened somewhat, but she still at times seems to provoke the others to strike at her, as if she can then justify blowing

up at them and running from the room. She has considerable rivalry with Peg and Alice and most often gets into fights with them. She is controlled by May and also often stimulated by her, picking up some of May's loudness and bossiness. She often depreciates herself in front of others, and withdraws from them in order to get attention from the worker.

Since she seems to have gained a little confidence in herself, these demands have lessened somewhat in recent sessions. Kay was the first girl who had a significant reaction to the worker's marriage and her leaving. She said, "You will have babies of your own and not love us anymore." She also then tested the worker's reassurance, mostly by calling her names, just as she had previously said "Get away from me, I don't want you," as both a testing out and a denial of her real feelings. She is related to worker much more than before. She talks with her more and is more companionable.

Kay will need continued help to get a better picture of herself and her ability to have successful experiences in projects and in general club activities. She needs help to avoid having to blow up and then play the poor hurt girl—mostly by interpreting to her ahead of time what she is trying to do.

It is important to note that in this child's situation, as occurs frequently, there was a carryover of successful interaction into other group settings, particularly school and the Girl Scouts.

### **Spontaneous Group Meetings**

Needless to say, if the children in an institution can be assisted by the group method in a more spontaneous way, this is very helpful. Opportunities present themselves very frequently, and can help to clarify some of the real issues behind a child's discomfort and misconduct.

When eleven-year-old Lily had a lot of difficulty in the cottage, a group session was required to reassure her. Lily had been stimulating other children to act up at shower time and bedtime. She avoided going to sleep, remembering at the last minute that she had homework, doing a lot of giggling and running about. Houseparents found her somewhat unapproachable and unreliable at this time. Since the child's caseworker was not available at the moment, the director visited the youngster. He indicated he was not distressed by her recent display of misconduct, but that there was something bothering her that she had not been able to discuss. Perhaps she could indicate to her social worker, to the houseparent or to him what her difficulty was, and need not get herself into continued difficulty. No one wanted her to be unhappy.

The child then told about difficulty in going to sleep. She had been fighting off sleep for fear of a recurring dream in which she recalled visiting her mother at the state hospital. This had been a frightening experience to which the child had not allowed herself to react sufficiently before. Discussion of this quickly revealed the child's sense of damage as a result of having a psychotic mother. She thought herself to be the only child with such a background, and did not seem to be able to accept some of the general statements concerning her situation. The director pointed out that there are three other children in residence at the institution whose parents were mentally ill and had at one time or other been hospitalized. He said that if she and the others were willing, a group meeting could be held right then and there to discuss the situation. Three of the four children agreed.

The discussion that followed was extremely helpful to each of them. They were not only extremely supportive but were skillful at interpreting to each other. They talked about the hurt and confused feelings that they had been experiencing, and were able to dispel, with some help, some of the fantasies they had been maintaining. They dealt with such anxieties as the fact that they thought themselves to be bad and had caused their parents to become ill; that the children themselves must in some way be defective and would in turn become mentally ill. They believed everyone knew they were bad, and that it is better to do something bad and be punished for it in order to feel better again than to go unpunished. There was amazement on the part of the girl that the little boy on whom she had a "crush" had a mentally ill mother. Her comment was a dazed, "But he's so nice, how could his mother be sick." By the time the group session closed, each child not only seemed to be aware of his or her own integrity as an individual, but was sympathetic toward his parents who had been unable to tolerate the pressures and problems they had faced.

They were now able to grasp the vague statement that their parents had a "nervous breakdown," which they had never before really understood. They were able to bring out resentment about the promiscuity and alcoholism of the parent who was ill, but also to indicate understanding of what had driven the parent to those extremes. They were able to express their greatest concern about the unpredictability of the parent who was ill. They went beyond this point in much more constructive fashion to explain how they had been testing out the adults in the institution—to prove to themselves that the adults would not become psychotic, would not fall before the onslaught of the child's symptomatic behavior, and would not die, or go away, or become ill. One child was able to relate his fear of leaving the institution to this concern. He said that although he was sure of the people at the institution, he would not be able to be sure about future foster parents and their ability to resist mental breakdown.

This kind of spontaneous group session has great value for an institution, particularly since it can occur at the time when the children need assistance most and their anxiety is most discomforting, as long as a staff member is available for such aid. Opportunities present themselves very frequently, and the meetings go a long way toward clarifying some of the real issues which underlie the surface patterns.

The experience at Edgewood Children's Center and at the Forest Park Children's Center with social group work or therapy oriented group care has been highly gratifying as a direct service to children, both as individuals and as members of a group. It has helped set the tone for individual treatment of the children. It has also provided further in-service training for the staff. In a merged agency it has been of special value in helping to bring about group identifications.

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# VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS AND CONCEPTS

## UNDERLYING THE REVISED STANDARDS FOR FOSTER FAMILY CARE SERVICE\*†

**Zitha R. Turitz**

Director, Standards Project  
Child Welfare League of America

It is exactly eighteen years since *Standards for Children's Organizations Providing Foster Family Care* was published by the League. It began by reaffirming the statement of the 1909 White House Conference that

"Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. . . . Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons."

### Some Principles of the 1941 Standards

The 1941 standards were based on "accepted principles of child welfare and child care." The first of these was that

"A child's own home and family are the natural medium in which normal social and personality development can best be assured."

Studies of the child's emotional and social development had already confirmed the significance of the relationship of the child to his own family. The standards recognized that

"every child who must leave his own home and live away from his own family suffers a profound emotional and social disturbance which can never be altogether compensated."

The first responsibility of community child welfare programs was considered to be "the prevention of family breakdown and the conservation of wholesome family life." It was stated that

"Children should be cared for away from their own families only after efforts to bring about favorable conditions within the home for the wholesome development of the child have been unsuccessful."

"If necessary, the child's own family should be assisted in every possible way to meet his needs in his own

\* Given at the New England Regional Conference, Hartford, Connecticut, on March 6, 1959.

† The *Preliminary Draft of Standards for Foster Family Care Service* has been prepared by Draza Kline, following Committee discussion under the chairmanship of Leon Richman, and has been reviewed by League member agencies. The final statement will be published in June 1959.

home . . . the services of relatives, the church, public assistance departments, Aid to Dependent Children, Child Welfare Services, health agencies, psychiatric clinics, family casework agencies and all other social service and child welfare resources in the community should be utilized as needed, in order to preserve and rehabilitate the child's own home."

In 1940, public aid to dependent children in their own homes had tripled over a five-year period, from 286,000 to 820,000 children.

Other principles on which the 1941 standards were based included the following:

"For many of the children who must leave their own homes, foster family care offers the most favorable conditions for normal development.

"The type of care which is provided for the child should be based on a consideration of the wishes of his parents, his individual needs, and his family situation.

"The social casework method should be employed in determining and meeting the needs of children whose own parents are unable to give them the care they should have.

"The objectives of foster care should be to make available opportunities favorable to the maximum development of the child's native capacities and ability to cope with the life situations which he must face.

"A complete community child welfare program is necessary in order that each child may receive the care he requires."

The introduction to the standards pointed the way to the development of public social services, "not by taking over" the work of private organizations but by "provision of services for children in the large areas in which child protection and care have been neglected entirely or where they are inadequate to meet the needs of the children who require such services."

### Developments Since 1941

Since 1941, there have been continuous and significant developments in providing services to children requiring care away from their own families. We have increasingly

used knowledge from other fields (such as child development, psychology, sociology, medicine, psychiatry, genetics, anthropology and law) to help us to a better understanding of normal child development and growth, the needs of the child, the importance of the child-parent relationship, parental rights, effects of separation from the parent, the hazards of replacement, and the concept of the "healthy personality." We have acquired deeper understanding of what happens to the child who lacks the essentials for his full personality development, and of parents who are unable to fulfill their role. We have greater assurance of the effectiveness of some of our procedures and skills in helping children and parents, and in working with foster parents.

In spite of the changes in the problems and characteristics of children who require care outside their own homes, the basic principles underlying practice in foster family care as a social welfare service for children have remained essentially unchanged. It is disconcerting to have to face the fact that in many respects we have not yet gathered the courage to live by our convictions, to make it possible for many children to have what they need in their own families. Nor have we found ways of bringing help to them soon enough. Many children are still receiving services that happen to be there, rather than those they need or those we know to be best for them. We are too often unable to use what we already know, while at the same time we are being made more aware than ever, particularly by our colleagues in research, of what we do not know.

### **Working Basis for Standards**

The assignment to the Committee on Standards for Foster Family Care Service was to prepare standards "based on tested knowledge and approved practice in social work and other related and professional fields."

In many technical fields it is possible, on the basis of repeated tests or proven hypotheses, to determine the most effective way of achieving a stated purpose, and to set

down certain approved procedures, materials or design to be followed as standards. In social work we do not, as yet, have the body of knowledge that clearly establishes what has to be done to reach a desired result. Neither do we always know what the desired result may be.

In writing standards in child welfare, we have tried to take the scientist's point of view as described by Brock Chisholm:

"It is, in the first place, to learn to live with our ignorance—because we still are ignorant. This, of course, is the 'scientist's' point of view. He does not feel impelled to 'make up' answers in areas in which he has no acceptable evidence. He leaves his mind wide open for conviction, or wide open for consideration, and makes up his mind whenever evidence is satisfactory and whenever he feels that there is enough good evidence to give him a working basis, so that he can believe in something, at least until he gets further evidence."

We had to recognize that, to a large extent, our practices have as a "working basis" certain principles, assumptions, and values related to child rearing, family life, and the responsibility of society for children. In revising the foster family care standards, we have attempted to make these explicit.

Before writing the standards, we needed to review current practice and theory in providing care for children in foster families: first, in relation to the children who require such care today; and then, in the light of what we know about children and the treatment of their problems.

In preparing the standards, we have, however, been less concerned with techniques and operational procedures, and more with goals and steps in the process of providing a service to children. We have examined what we do and then have turned our attention to *why* we do it, rather than *how*.

As a frame of reference for formulating standards, we had to decide what we believe is good for children. We had to define what we mean by a "standard," and we had to have a concept of foster family care service.

### **What Is Good for Children**

We have accepted the "well-being of the child," or "healthy personality" as what we desire for all children.

We believe that every child should have what is essential for his healthy development. We conclude that whatever meets needs in a way that assures healthy development is good for the child, and whatever interferes with or jeopardizes it, is not good. We believe a good way for a child to be reared is one that provides him with the conditions and opportunities favorable to the development, use and enjoyment of his capacities. Our judgments of a parent's ability to meet dependency and growth needs of a child, or of a foster family's suitability, will depend on what we judge to be favorable conditions and opportunities.

We believe that the family is the most desirable means of assuring for a child the essentials for his well-being. For that reason, each child should have a family of his own. Since we believe it is better for a child to be able to grow up with his own parents, we have conviction about helping parents to fulfill the parental role to the best of their ability.

We believe that because of its stake in what happens to the child, the community must accept responsibility for supplementing parental efforts to provide the essentials for development and functioning that meet social and cultural expectations. It must also protect the best interests of the child when parents are unable, even with help, to meet the child's needs.

### **What Is a "Standard"?**

Standards are practices which are "good for children." They are based on children's needs rather than on existing agency or community structure, patterns of financing, laws, or the special interests of any one community group. They are practices by which a service is provided for individual children in a way that promotes their well-being.

The new standards are therefore written for foster family care service, wherever it is offered, regardless of setting or auspices, and not, as in 1941, as standards for children's organizations.

The standards are designed to be used as goals toward which agencies may advance in

improving their services to children, and are to be differentiated from minimum requirements for League membership, or from state licensing requirements. They are intended to be the *best practices* in providing foster family care as a child welfare service. In order to determine the nature and scope of the service, its integral parts and its purpose, we used the following concept of a child welfare service:

A child welfare service is a total service that has evolved as a way of providing a remedy for specified social problems of children which occur when the basic needs of the child are unmet within the family, and for which the community has concern and therefore assumes some responsibility.

### **What Is Foster Family Care Service?**

Foster family care service is one of the services which express the concern of the community or the state for children who may lack the care they need when parents are unable to perform their child-rearing role effectively, or can do so only with some assistance.

The primary problem of children for whom foster family care service is appropriate is the lack of adequate parental care required to meet their dependency and developmental needs. Other concurrent problems resulting from or contributing to the inability of parents to give the child the care he needs are considered to be secondary.

In foster family care, the distinctive element in the treatment of the primary social problem is the substitute family life experience for the child, together with individualized casework and other treatment services for child and parents. For this reason, we have used the term "foster family care service," rather than foster home or boarding home care, and regard *placement* not as the service but as one of the processes involved in the provision of "the substitute family life experience for the child."

Each service requires the use of one or more social work methods (generally casework), defined formalized procedures, spe-

and are required to foster care. In scope of purpose, the child service, including a number of items of care needs of the family, concernability.

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cific resources that have been developed to supplement or substitute for parental care, an administrative structure that can assume and discharge the responsibility delegated by the community, and community provisions—such as legislation and other health and welfare services—to support the service.

These concepts, assumptions and values became the frame of reference used by the Committee on Standards for Foster Family Care Service. They helped the committee to resolve some of the issues and questions about current practices, and to arrive at conclusions.

Examination of a few of these will illustrate how we derived standards of practice, and why new or sharper emphases emerged in the standards written in 1957.

### **Meeting Needs and Treating Problems**

The total service of foster family care is said to have a threefold responsibility in providing the child with

*care to meet his normal developmental needs*  
*protection against whatever may jeopardize his well-being*

*treatment of those problems of the child and his parents which interfere with the child's healthy development and/or his ability to use and benefit by the total service*

In 1941, foster care was expected to "make available opportunities favorable for the maximum development of the child's native capacities and ability to cope with the life situations he must face"; and to provide "physical care, guidance, education, vocational training, recreation, religious values, childhood activities . . . stability . . . and security through being wanted, loved and understood."

Today we stress that "foster family care offers a closer approximation to normal family living than other types of care, and can better meet the child's normal developmental needs," as it offers "opportunities for emotional development and socialization in accordance with the prevailing culture of our society."

In 1941 it was recognized that: "Every child for whom foster care is necessary shows varying degrees of emotional disturbance." Today we know more about problems of the child, including not only the emotional or behavior disorders which may be reactive to the family difficulties that have brought about the need for placement, but those inherent in the separation of a child from his own family and in his placement elsewhere. Foster family care must therefore not only meet the child's normal growth and developmental needs, but also provide treatment of his problems.

We have, however, attempted to differentiate between the treatment of personality disturbances in the child or parent, and the treatment of the social problem through foster family care as a total social welfare service. We have tried to identify the treatment elements within the experience of substitute family life ("corrective experiences"), in the process of placement, and in the casework relationship, as well as in the casework or psychiatric interview with the child and with the parents.

### **Work with Parents**

Because we believe that the child's primary need for someone on whom he can depend, for love and care and for continuity of emotional relationship, can ordinarily be met best by his own parents, we believe it preferable if his problem of inadequate parental care can be solved by strengthening and restoring the capacity of his own family to meet his needs.

Our conviction about the inseparability of the well-being of child and parents obligates us to offer continuing casework help to parents, and also to protect their rights. We have said that "any abridgment of parental rights should be only to the extent or for the length of time required in the interest of the child." We have therefore taken a stand against court action in the commitment of children to the care of agencies. We have also opposed the transfer of legal custody when such action is taken only to obtain the use of

public funds to pay for the costs of foster family care.

At the same time, because we believe that the interests of the child should be paramount, we have to be ready to help parents who can never assume a parental role to recognize this. We must be ready to help them to give up the child voluntarily so that he may be free to become part of another family. If necessary, we must request the court to terminate parental rights in the interests of the child.

There are implications here for the development of both diagnostic and treatment skills in working with parents when the crucial decision must be made, by the parent and/or the caseworker, as to whether it is better for the child to be cared for either temporarily or permanently by someone else. We are often handicapped by lack of knowledge in our evaluation of a parent's ability to perform the parental role in relation to a particular child, and in our use of diagnoses of *complete disability*, *partial impairment*, or *amount of parental functioning present*. Nor can we always prognosticate the effectiveness of supporting or supplementing parental strengths. We are aware of the need for diagnostic skills, both at intake and in periodic evaluations of the casework plan, for determining a parent's child-rearing potentials, his ability to deal with his own and/or the child's problems, and his capacity to use help.

#### ***Basis for Selection of Service***

Foster family care must be selectively used for children who cannot be otherwise assured adequate parental care, and whose individual needs can best be met through a substitute family life experience. We can begin to identify the characteristics of children and their families for whom it is an appropriate service, and those for whom some other type of service may be better suited. If each child is to have the care he needs, we must have greater skills in differential diagnosis, we must allow time for continuing or periodic evaluation in casework planning, and we

must have available a range of services that can be selectively used.

In view of the needs of the child, it is not possible to justify prolonged indefinite use of foster care for children whose parents could be helped to resume their responsibilities, or for children for whom permanent family ties should be established through adoption. On this basis, we have also questioned the routine use of temporary foster homes; general use of work, wage and free homes; or group care of infants even in foster families.

#### ***Foster Parents***

It is a major function of foster family care "to provide a normal family life experience for the child . . ." as well as "to offer a corrective living experience for the child whose previous life experiences have been unsatisfactory."

The foster family through which the child may have the experiences and care he needs must therefore be selected on the basis of ability to serve the child, and not because of the family's need for a service. For this reason, the foster parents cannot be considered clients. Any help to them is given only in the child's behalf. The casework method may be used in working with foster parents, but its purpose is to develop their ability to understand and meet the child's needs better, and to help them to work with the agency, collaborate in carrying out a casework plan, and derive some satisfaction in doing so.

In view of their part in providing not only care but a service to the child, we must consider payment for their services, over and above payment for board. We must begin to redefine the requirements for foster parents and to recognize the need to recruit those with a variety of skills, who can work with the agency in different ways.

#### ***The Agency***

We have said that the social problem and developmental needs of children, and not the structure of the agency or the setting, determine what the service should be. However,

agency organization and administration must be that which can render the service as defined, and discharge the responsibility which the community accepts for children whose parents cannot meet their needs without some assistance. Legal and administrative structure, financing, staffing and case loads must make it possible to provide and coordinate the various parts of the service needed in behalf of the child.

### ***The Community***

The community and ultimately the state have the responsibility, through voluntary or governmental forms of organization, to make services available to each child on the basis of his needs and problems. The complementary responsibilities of private and public child welfare services are recognized, with clear assignment to the public agency to develop services of high quality for children who are not otherwise adequately served.

This implies an obligation to obtain financial support for necessary services, to develop a sufficient number of foster family homes in every community, and to offer services when needed to make it possible for the child to remain with, or return to, his own family.

### ***Implications for Agency Practice***

In a sense, standards imply, "If you believe these things, you must do the following."

ing." In formulating standards, we had to decide what we want for children and what we believe is good for them, and then had to proceed to what must be done to provide it. We had to overcome the tendency "to avoid implications and to shirk the consequences."

In the ivory tower of committee meetings, we dared to think and even to dream of how we might better serve children, unrestricted by such realities as staff shortages, lack of boarding homes, insufficient funds, overwhelming case loads, outmoded laws, inadequate community resources, and the gaps in knowledge and skills needed for diagnostic planning and continuing treatment.

We recognized that standards can stimulate improvement of services only if they bring about dissatisfaction with present practices and conviction that change is needed. For this to take place, we must redefine our goals and values for children. We must come to understand what is essential for their well-being, and what happens to the child who lacks these essentials. We must understand why some parents may be unable to give children what they need from parents. And finally we must know how society can discharge its responsibility to children more effectively, through social welfare services which help them and their parents to deal with problems which interfere with meeting the growth and developmental needs of children.

## **THE USE OF LEAGUE STANDARDS IN A PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE AGENCY\***

### **Comments**

***Robert F. Ott***

Director

Division of Child Guardianship  
Massachusetts Department of  
Public Welfare

WHEN I was first asked to discuss the Revised Standards for Foster Family Care Service, it was suggested that I speak about their meaning and use in a public foster care

agency. However I came to the conclusion that these standards should become the basis of *any* children's foster care agency. Because our service programs are fundamentally the same, whether offered by a public or private agency, I found it most difficult to approach

\* Given at CWLA New England Regional Conference, on March 5, 1959.

the subject purely from the viewpoint of a public one. I also reviewed the use and meaning of these standards to a social work administrator in a public agency.

I believe that social work, especially child welfare, has needed for a long time a document that would identify its areas of practice, competence and current knowledge, and thus lead to a good program for children. We can benefit greatly by a positive formalization of the principles which underlie child welfare practice. The preparation, interpretation and promulgation of these Standards for Foster Family Care Service lead us logically into a process of disciplined professional thinking, so essential in the development of specific knowledge in the field of social work.

At times we fail to engage in disciplined thinking in formulating the basic concepts of our profession. Much sloppy, sentimental thinking has been justified in the name of freedom to experiment, or even worse, in the name of casework practice. At the same time, formalized policy development, in essence the documentation of sound social work administration and casework, is looked upon as an evil to be avoided.

I firmly believe in casework, and the stimulation of program planning through freedom to experiment in order to develop a dynamic service. But I also believe that if we are to take our proper place in the professions and make a most worthwhile contribution to those we serve, we must also train our minds to disciplined thinking. Only in this way can we more concretely and readily identify our agency's philosophy, its goals, and its program, and implement them by sound policies directed toward better services for children.

These standards take a giant step in the right direction by identifying the necessary practices in the field of foster family care for children. In addition, they help to create a frame of reference in which we in the field can develop consistency of goals and identify the casework and administration practices essential for improving services to children.

This is especially helpful in a large public agency where often the program and objectives are diffused because the agency is expected to do so much with so little. For the most part, the public does not give us the equipment to accomplish what it wishes us to. In this kind of social work environment it becomes difficult to readily identify the countless efficient practices that make up a sound program for children needing foster care. Only after much soul searching and "blood, sweat and tears" do we arrive at these necessary convictions and practices.

And so revised standards such as these will be of tremendous help to us in the public field, and also to those in private agencies. In sharpening the focus and revitalizing convictions and practices so that we can more easily identify what is good for children, the standards will help us set more realistic goals in planning an effective program. In addition, I feel that they will be of great help in our efforts to develop methods and techniques essential for achieving these goals and practices.

As I studied these standards, I was keenly interested in reviewing our own policies in the Massachusetts Division of Child Guardianship to see the similarity in the topics covered. As a result of our own efforts to put our practices, policies, philosophy and goals in writing, I see in these standards a substantial guide for a public agency. They offer great support for some of our own concepts, which often have to stand the severe test of hostile forces not identified with social work.

These standards gave me reassurance in many areas in which the Division of Child Guardianship has struggled—for example, casework with parents, direct placement in adoptions, development and use of foster homes, qualifications of foster families, protection of parental rights, licensing of agencies, relationship between public and private agencies. Our own Policy Manual gave much attention to these aspects—as well as to other material covered in the Standards for Foster Family Care Services—when we strug-

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gled to develop these and other social casework and administrative concepts for our training program, for our policy development, for our administrative concern and for our legislative recodification.

Therefore, to me the graphic story these standards tell is that constructive foster family care practices are sound for all children who need care, whether in a public or a private agency. They will offer guidance in identifying our common purpose; they will give reassurance to us in large public agencies which can easily become lost in the maze of many administrative and casework problems; they will give us a broad and important perspective regarding the entire field of child welfare; and they will identify those practices which assure a sound program for children's services.

In conclusion, I see these standards as a challenging document that will not allow us to hide behind a broad, general, superficial program. By stimulating initiative in developing efficient practices for child welfare in general, and for public child welfare in particular, it should help us to build a positive program of social services for all children under our care.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

### *Freedom from Obstacles to Adoption*

WE CONGRATULATE the New York State Legislature on the passage of the Anderson, Passannate and Gordon bills. These provide urgently needed measures, enabling courts to free children from ties to parents when the relationship is only a distressing entanglement for both parent and child. These are the children who have been called "orphans of the living." As orphans, they should have the chance of being given new parents who would offer them the love, care and guidance essential to their growth and development. But their needs have for a long time been obscured by the shadow of their living parents.

And when the Governor has signed these bills, as we are confident he will, many, many children may in time find themselves as members of families by adoption, where they can be secure in the loving protection they would otherwise never have.

The significant provisions of the bills are a definition of a permanently neglected child, and amendments to a section of the domestic relations law to allow adoption of a child without the consent of a parent who has been deprived permanently of the custody of the child, often on the finding that the child is permanently neglected.

"(24) 'Permanently neglected child' means a child whose parent or guardian has, following the placement or commitment of such child in the care of an authorized agency, whether in an institution or in a foster home, and notwithstanding the diligent efforts of such agency to encourage and strengthen the parental relationship, so failed substantially and continuously or repeatedly, for a period of more than one year, to maintain contact with and plan for the future of the child, although physically and financially able to do so, that such parent or guardian should, in the moral and temporal interests of such child, be deprived permanently of the custody of the child, and, in the event that the parent defaults after due notice of a proceeding to determine such neglect, such physical and financial ability of such parent may be presumed by the court."

These bills make it possible to remove the technical obstacles to adoption of these otherwise adoptable children. These obstacles reflect the concern to respect and protect the primary rights of parents to give care and custody to their children, and to plan for responsible supplementary or substitute care when they are themselves unable to provide

care. Such rights must not be abrogated, except when every effort has been made to help the parents discover or strengthen their capacity for parenthood.

The Gordon bill authorizes public welfare officials to provide free care for a child born out of wedlock, and for its mother during pregnancy and after delivery; and authorizes the public welfare official to have the discretion, in view of all the facts and circumstances present in a case—

"to determine whether or not to make any such investigation and record or to require such woman, or any person or persons liable by law to contribute to her support, to pay all or any part of the cost of such assistance and care"

This enables social agencies to offer aid to unmarried mothers without having to inform members of their families, and without compelling them to institute bastardy proceedings against the father when this step is not in the best interest of the mother.

The plight of children whose own parents can provide neither a home nor sustaining love for their children living away from home is a national problem. The legislature of the State of New York has taken a great step toward solving this problem. In addition the state's action serves as an encouraging example to others to move forward in providing the means by which social agencies, all over the country, can enable such children to find homes in which they can grow up to be helpful and useful citizens.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON

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# REACCREDITATION—WHAT IT MEANS TO AN AGENCY

**Max W. Babb, Jr.**

President

Children's Service Society of Wisconsin  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*A board member discusses the responsibilities of the board in the administration of an agency, its interest in the League's reaccreditation study, and the action taken on specific recommendations.*

**T**WO YEARS AGO the Child Welfare League of America made a reaccreditation study of the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. I have been asked to evaluate what such a study means to an agency, and while my observations are primarily those of the board member, they have, I hope, the general concurrence of a highly capable staff.

The announcement that the League is to make a reaccreditation study should be a cause of great satisfaction to an agency. The purpose, the program and the means by which they are carried out are to be reviewed by an expert who, if not completely disinterested, is still removed from day-to-day operations, from close personal contacts, and from local influences. As such, the operations can be measured against broad standards of child welfare which must be the goal of every agency.

Naturally, there will be some misgivings at the outset, since no one is anxious to have his possible shortcomings exposed to inspection. Still, a conscientious board and staff must welcome such an opportunity, and be prepared to accept any criticisms and recommendations in the constructive manner in which they are offered.

## **What a Reaccreditation Study Offers**

The professional staff of an agency, while not directly responsible to the Child Welfare League, is judged to a great extent by the quality of the agency with which it is associated. Apart from a sincere desire to do a good job, staff members benefit directly from association with an agency with high standards and excellent reputation. Accordingly, they have a great concern with the conclusions of the League.

Two extremely important benefits are brought to board members by a reaccreditation study. First of all, the great majority of board members receive their perspective of child welfare from the staff of their own agency. Few, if any, are able to attend regional or national conferences, or can do enough reading and research to become thoroughly familiar with a profession requiring a graduate degree and years of full-time experience. Their viewpoint must, of necessity, reflect that of the staff with which they are associated. A study by the League can serve to show up any deficiencies resulting from this relationship.

The second benefit to board members is the removal of local conditions from the evaluation. A reaccreditation study must measure the agency's performance against nationally accepted standards of child welfare. It is all too easy to excuse shortcomings on the basis of lack of community support, regional customs, general economic conditions and other such factors. But it still remains the board's responsibility to take every possible action to ensure that the agency will measure up to the highest standards not of the community alone, but of the entire country.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is not to praise the agency for things which it is doing well, since it is supposed to be doing them well. However, the report will indicate the efficiency with which the agency's program is being planned and carried out, and if this is relatively high it will be a source of deep gratification to both board and staff, as it was to all of us.

The immediate purpose of a reaccreditation study, as set forth in the League's report, is threefold:

To establish the fact that the agency continues to meet basic eligibility requirements for membership in the Child Welfare League of America.

To help the Child Welfare League become more thoroughly acquainted with the agency's current program.

To offer, for the agency's consideration, suggestions about aspects of administration or service which require specific attention to increase the total effectiveness of the program.

The first of these purposes is certainly necessary, but is hardly the primary objective from the agency's standpoint. No board member can consider the job well done if the agency merely qualifies for membership, high though the standards may be. This is a starting point, not the goal.

The second purpose is also important. While the agencies look to the League for guidance and standards, the League must in turn be thoroughly familiar with the programs and accomplishments of its members, since many of the advances and necessary changes in the field of child welfare originate in the operating agencies.

It is the third purpose, however, which is most important. Here the League's national perspective, its experience and knowledge, can be brought to the individual agency. All the recommendations cannot be accomplished immediately, and some can perhaps never be accomplished, but they represent objectives which must either be undertaken or rejected only with well-considered reasons.

### **Recommendations Regarding the Board**

In our reaccreditation study a number of recommendations were made. The more important ones, and our response, might well be of interest to other similar agencies.

It was recommended that the board "study the low attendance at meetings and, after determining the reasons, effect the necessary changes so that more members attend regularly."

As a statewide agency we have had a number of board members from outside the immediate vicinity of Milwaukee. They are

chosen primarily for their interest in our program and the work they can do in their own communities. Some of them can attend board meetings regularly, but many others cannot. However they are carrying on their responsibilities in their local communities, and this is of fundamental importance to our program.

In the Milwaukee area we have a few members who do not attend monthly board meetings regularly, but who contribute particular abilities in committee assignments because of their training or occupation (e.g. school personnel and doctors). We feel that these members are of great value and should continue on the board.

Based on the recommendation of the study, the board decided that the matter of attendance should be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee. It will review the directors' records annually and discuss the problem with the individual member, taking into consideration geographical limitations and the value of the contribution he is making over and above board meeting attendance. It was agreed that nominees for membership on the board should clearly understand the regular meeting dates and serve on committees. However, it felt that there should be no provision in the bylaws covering this point.

"Some plan should be adopted to provide for a limitation on number of terms a member may serve, with exceptions possible under certain circumstances."

A review of our membership and its turnover indicated that we are not faced with the problem of an "inbred" board. Only nine of our forty-five members have been on the board over seven years. To establish a time limit would deprive us of members who have contributed much and will continue to do so, and of others who have only recently been able to devote their full abilities to the job.

The board felt that the bylaws should not be changed on this point, since there is evidence that length of service has always been considered in presenting nominations, that a definition of "special circumstances" is difficult, and that a limiting bylaw might prove a

handicap in cases where a member is making a unique and necessary contribution.

"The bylaws should be revised to provide for permanent committee assignments."

This recommendation has been acted upon, with all standing committees, their responsibilities and membership qualifications written into the bylaws.

### **Expanded Adoption Program**

"The adoption program should be expanded to provide adoption services to all children in need of permanent family ties, regardless of age or handicap." (The study also pointed out the need for earlier placement of white infants.)

Before the reaccreditation study, the staff had been deeply concerned about the delay in adoptive placements of white infants, and the need for placement services for older children, handicapped children and non-white children. It is well known that the emotional development of infants may suffer severe damage if placement is long delayed. The obvious solution lay in additional staff, but because of financial obstacles the administration tried to meet the problem by reallocating current personnel. It assigned concentrated case loads of adoption studies to certain workers, "lent" adoption workers to areas where needs were greatest, and held group meetings for adoptive applicants.

Following the reaccreditation study and the impetus it provided, the Casework Committee of the board made a thorough study and analysis of material presented. It seemed clear that we needed broader adoption policies, plus additional adoption personnel, and the casework committee recommended this to the board of directors. The board voted certain modifications of our adoption policies, upon the advice of the staff, to benefit children with special needs. Exceptions for these children consist of a more flexible upper age limit for adoptive applicants and the placement of more than two children with a family. The board also authorized securing of additional staff to do adoptive studies in one district where we had the largest number of

applicants. Foundations in this district were approached by advisory board and staff members in those communities, and granted \$5,600 of the needed \$10,000, so that additional adoptive studies are currently under way. We have also submitted a priority request for a new permanent position, based on the League's report.

### **Study of Unmarried Mother Services**

"There was some evidence that there is a need for more services in the community and state for unmarried mothers and it is recommended that their problem be studied in cooperation with the State Department of Public Welfare and the Welfare Council to determine if the Society should be the agency to expand its services to meet this need."

In addition, the study noted that unmarried mothers under twenty-one were accepted for service more often than those over twenty-one, and that in some cases, older unmarried mothers who needed financial assistance were not accepted because no funds were available for that purpose. It was suggested "that the board and staff examine the program of services to unmarried mothers, and if the high percentage of rejections or withdrawals is related to financial problems, some special funds be made available for that purpose."

A review of agency practice showed that the number of unmarried mothers not accepted for care was small in relation to the total. The reasons the agency did not give service were:

The clients were referred elsewhere for religious reasons.

The clients were already known to another agency which wished to continue service.

The clients asked only for financial assistance and saw no need for our service after referral to the Department of Public Welfare.

After discussions of the above, the board did not think expanded services to unmarried mothers were needed. However, since maternity aid grants from the Department of Public Welfare require contact with responsible relatives, there will be an occasional instance where such contact would be not only disturbing but actually harmful. Therefore, the board is considering the allocation of a

limited fund for use by the staff in highly selected cases of financial need.

### **Developing Group and Foster Homes**

The study suggested that board and staff "consider developing other small group homes as the need for them is shown" and noted the trend toward "development of specialized foster homes for children with special problems."

At the time of the study our board and staff had already approved such a program, and had submitted a priority request to the Community Welfare Council of Milwaukee for the necessary funds. This request has since been approved, and the recommendations of the League undoubtedly strengthened our case for this allocation.

In addition to the above recommendations, there were a number of lesser importance, all of which have been considered and acted upon.

There can be no doubt that everyone benefited from the study. The board is reassured that the agency for which it is responsible is functioning in accordance with high standards, and is given specific recommendations for making service still better. The staff is given similar assurance. The community learns that its welfare dollars are being wisely spent and that further improvements can and will be made. The League becomes familiar with the agency, and also makes its value known to the agency and the community.

## **A COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE PROGRAM: Comments\***

**Mazie Rappaport**

**Division Chief  
Protective Services Division  
Department of Public Welfare  
Baltimore, Maryland**

IT IS BECOMING an axiom that a juvenile court can be only as good as the community's resources for children permit it to be. Surely among the most important resources for a children's court are the community's child welfare services, which stand ready to offer neglected and dependent children protective service in their own homes, or placement.

In his article, Mr. Thimm has described how the Multnomah County Juvenile Court and the public welfare agency of Portland, Oregon have worked together to determine their respective responsibilities for protective service. They undertook to shift some of the responsibility for protective service from the

*This discussant deals with the public welfare agency's responsibility for protective service.*

court, where it all began and remained for years. He spells out, with illustrative case material, the several kinds of cases referred by the court to the public welfare Children's Department. Equally clearly, Mr. Thimm illustrates and explains the various protective service cases which are still retained by the court for investigation. In general, the less serious report of possible neglect is referred by the court to the Children's Department, whether or not a petition has been filed, while the investigation of the serious situation still is considered the court's protective responsibility.

It is good to know of the continuing efforts of this juvenile court and the public child welfare service of Portland, to transfer much of the protective service responsibility where

\* These Comments refer to "A Community Protective Program," by Joseph L. Thimm, which appeared in the March issue of CHILD WELFARE.

it logically belongs—with the public child welfare agency.

Mr. Thimm sets forth clearly the basic responsibility of the court social service staff for casework service to the delinquent. He is forthright in his belief that the major responsibility for protective service rests with the welfare agency. But he is not yet ready to accept the fact that skilled and experienced child welfare caseworkers are capable of evaluating all reports of possible neglect from the community, making reports promptly to the court when requested, referring extreme cases of neglect to the law enforcement agency when necessary, and giving casework help to those families where improvement in the care of their children is essential and possible.

There is plenty of authority inherent in the protective service function to make it possible and right for the protective service worker to carry this full responsibility. Indeed, throughout the country protective service workers *are* investigating reports of serious neglect. These workers go forth with the knowledge and ability to set forth frankly their reason for being in the case, and to offer help to make things better for the whole family by seeing to it that the care of the children is improved.

I agree with Mr. Thimm that frequent turnover in public social agency staffs can create confusion for the court, and also that protective service cases need to be separated from other child welfare cases. But the turnover in child welfare staff might be reduced by making the protective service a distinct and separate service, in which the worker develops his perception and skill through experience and supervision. In my own agency we have found that once a caseworker learns this function she becomes very much interested in it and excited about it. This is a service which certainly requires maturity and professional competence, and the community has the right to look for these qualities in both its juvenile court and its protective agency; it has the responsibility to help these agencies recruit, train and compensate

caseworkers competent to carry a service which is so difficult and so important.

It is hoped that the Multnomah County Juvenile Court, which has broken from its own tradition and has gone so far in carrying forth the 1949 recommendation of the Child Welfare League of America,<sup>1</sup> will soon be able to accept leadership in making it clear to this community that a single protective agency, located in child welfare services, provides the best possibility for the protection of children. The children's court then could and should back that protective agency to the hilt, but also expect of it the highest standard of service in the protection of children.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thimm referred to Point 16 of the 1950 *Statement of Principles and Policies on Public Child Welfare*, which begins: "Public welfare departments as administrative agencies must depend upon the courts as judicial agencies to act in all matters requiring adjudication; likewise, non-judicial social service functions should be carried by a welfare department rather than by a court." This Statement has since been superseded by *A Statement of Principle and Policies on Administration of Voluntary and Public Child Welfare Agencies*, CWLA, 1958.

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## BOARD MEMBER PAGE

### What Board Members Are For\*

THE QUESTION, what are board members for, has been a perennial one. It involves the questions: what does a board member do, what does he get out of it, and what does he give. To answer these questions a responsible board member must start with a consideration of why he is on a board. It is not enough that it is your family tradition, or even that someone begged you to join a board. You have to feel that the agency has a purpose in which you have a share, in the most personal and direct way. Perhaps the greatest concern is how to achieve a stirring sense of participation.

There are many ways for an agency to involve its board. The new executive of one of our agencies was unhappy about his agency's policy of serving only "normal" children and turning away all those with behavior disorders. He asked each board member to follow up a child who had been rejected by the agency for six months, and see what happened to him. It is one thing to hear that boys and girls, even if they have committed no crimes, go from temporary detention homes to rigid and barred state training schools because there are no other facilities for them. But when board members saw it happen to impish fourteen-year-old John Lopez or fifteen-year-old Lucy Thompson, the board changed the agency's policies and began raising funds to implement the new ones.

Board members shouldn't have to be shown. We ought to walk down a few of our own streets, drop in on the family courts. We should find out about the needs of our communities, the part our agency is playing in meeting those needs, and what other agencies in the community are doing. If one fails or doesn't measure up, all other agencies are affected. One of the most important func-

tions of a private agency is backing good public programs, so that all children needing care might be constructively served.

If we get the sense of mission that was such a wonderful part of our grandparents' philanthropy, even the struggle with the budget can help us feel we are furthering human happiness. And we had better have that feeling for no matter what else changes, the budget we will always have with us. As a result of federated financing, many boards begin to feel they have no responsibility at all for fund raising. Then when the need for special financing of exceptional projects comes up, they have gotten out of the habit. When faced with the always difficult job of personal door-to-door fund-raising, they turn around and run the other way.

Then, too, some boards forget that community chests and funds do not operate in Shangri-La. The people they approach for money are the very ones who used to contribute to agency drives. How can an agency board possibly disclaim responsibility for seeing that the local fund or chest raises its budget?

True this works two ways. Agency board members and executives are excluded from some chest boards. It is up to the board members of participating agencies to show the chests that this is a mistaken way to handle community funds. Active fund-raising and continuing concern with allotments can melt the strongest opposition.

Agency board members who work hard for their chests or United Funds do not thereby waive the right to speak up for their own agencies. Rather they reinforce it. And if they see that their own agencies are being short-changed, I think they should protest most articulately.

Waging a good fight in a good cause should be a board function anyhow, just as much as program and finances. Agencies need a sense of self, too, and it is up to us board members to see that they have it. We should

\* Excerpts from a speech given by Mrs. Bernhard at the New England Regional Conference, Hartford, Connecticut, on March 6, 1959.

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be the ones to assert, to take criticism, to fight back, if necessary. We lay people are in the broadest sense the link between agency and community.

Once we understand the programs of our agencies, and are excited and inspired by them, it is up to us to sell them. We serve on commissions and appear before legislatures. We go down to City Hall, and speak at the Rotary Club. We write letters to the editor and get to the program chairman of the League of Women Voters. We can't sell a theatre benefit ticket without giving some explanation of what the benefit is for, and the dinner party companion who asks what I do is answered—at length.

The interpretation to our agencies may be as important as our interpretation to the community. Staff workers can become terribly impatient, especially if they are the enthusiastic, dedicated men and women we hope for. We board members know that our communities are not hard-hearted but ignorant when they fail to provide enough facilities for disturbed children; that our doctors are not evil but uninformed when they place babies for adoption; that social change may be slow—but it does come. We can be a steady and encouraging influence on agency staffs.

We have obligation to ask questions the minute we have any doubts. The League has often encountered difficult situations in agencies that could have been settled long before they became acute by some plain speaking and searching by the board. It may find that its doubts and questions are unjustified, and this it would want to know. Or it might find much that could be improved. A good executive and staff would want to know this too.

It is up to us to influence judicial attitudes so that the many children in foster care who are without parental ties can have good warm adoptive homes—and to do it fast before they grow up. There is a chance too for some good missionary work in the community on

the subject of adopting older children. We ought to spread the word that five-year olds—or even nine-year olds—can still use mothering and fathering.

We have known for some time that it is most harmful to keep babies in institutions, yet only two states—Kansas and Wisconsin—have so far made it impossible to keep babies in congregate care by refusing to license institutions. League agencies find foster homes for their babies, I know, but does our responsibility end there? Shouldn't we talk so loud about what it does to babies to live in an institution that all agencies end the practice?

The League needs help too in raising the standards of child welfare. There are about 2,500 child-care agencies in the country; 10 percent belong to the League and another 800 get counsel and guidance from us. But we are not reaching half of the child-care agencies who could use our help.

There is no aspect of the program of the League or any other social agency that does not need the support of dedicated and informed lay people. But one that I must mention particularly is recruitment of good young people into the field of social work. Understanding the values of social work education, we can urge our young people into the field. Posters are not going to make a young man or woman go into social work, but talking with someone who thinks it a good, rewarding way of life may, and helping to raise money for much needed scholarships will make more social workers eventually available.

Clearly the better our workers are, the deeper their understanding of human behavior and the greater their compassion and skill, the better our agencies will be. And the better our agencies—our own special concern—the greater our pride and satisfaction. What more can we ask?

MRS. RICHARD J. BERNHARD  
*President, CWLA*

# PRACTICES IN SELECTING ADOPTIVE PARENTS

**Donald Brieland**

Executive Director

Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund  
Chicago, Illinois

WHAT ARE the trends in selection of adoptive parents? Practices of twenty-seven agencies<sup>1</sup> in thirteen states were studied as part of a larger project.<sup>2</sup> Discussions held with agency executives and staff members, and a questionnaire completed by all the agencies yielded data on a variety of agency practices.

The twenty-seven agencies placed a total of 3,533 children in 1958, of whom 2,770 were Caucasian infants. Total placements by any one agency ranged from 10 to 430. All but one agency indicated that the infant group represented the major portion of its adoption program.

## Ratio of Applicants to Children

The ratio of the number of couples seen at intake to children available ranged from a low of 1.43 to 1 to a high of 8 to 1. The two agencies with 8 to 1 ratios are under Jewish sponsorship. Both the median and the mode were ratios of 3 to 1. Methods of counting adoption inquiries differed so much that data

<sup>1</sup> Appreciation is expressed to the following agencies for their cooperation: Boston Children's Service Association; Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon; Children's Home Society of California, Los Angeles; Children's Home Society of California, Golden Gate District; Children's Home Society of Minnesota; Children's Services, Cleveland; Catholic Home Bureau, Chicago; Catholic Social Service, Pittsburgh; Chicago Child Care Society; Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis; Family and Children's Service, Pittsburgh; Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society; Iowa Children's Home Society; Jewish Children's Bureau, Chicago; Lake Bluff Children's Home, Lake Bluff, Illinois; Louise Wise Services, New York; Lutheran Child Welfare Association, Addison, Illinois; Lutheran Home Finding Society, Chicago; Lutheran Social Service, Chicago; Michigan Children's Aid Society; Methodist Children's Home Society, Detroit; Michigan Children's Institute; North Carolina Children's Home Society; St. Mary's Home for Children, Chicago; Spence-Chapin Adoption Service, New York; Vista Del Mar Association, Los Angeles; Washington Children's Home Society, Seattle.

<sup>2</sup> The project, involving 184 worker-judges from the agencies who evaluated tape recordings of actual intake interviews, is reported fully in *An Experimental Study of the Selection of Adoptive Parents at Intake*, by Donald Brieland, Child Welfare League of America, New York. This report is now in preparation.

were not comparable, but the number of inquiries was considerably larger than the number of intake interviews held. The ratios reported of couples to children available were generally lower than those usually considered to prevail.

Supply and demand varied widely. Seven agencies reported more applicants proportionately than in 1957, six reported the same number, and thirteen reported fewer. One of the agencies showed varying trends in its different branch offices. Some agencies indicated there had been a drop in the number of applicants but that the change had come in 1957 rather than in 1958. When a drop was reported the causes were not usually clear.

Some agencies expressed concern that they were not getting enough qualified applicants to meet the needs of their children. Staff members felt that publicity on adoption had created an inaccurate picture by overemphasizing the difficulties of agency adoption, and giving the impression of such high ratios of applicants to children available that many people have been discouraged from applying. Other reasons mentioned for scarcity of qualified applicants included the business down-turn in 1958, more children available through agencies (and therefore a lower ratio), and increased success of medical efforts to overcome sterility. Placing more handicapped children and older children may also have lowered the ratio.

Several of the agencies that reported an increase in applicants were making special efforts to develop their adoption programs, which had been very small.

## Period between Intake and Placement

The interval between intake and placement varied considerably. The range was from three to twenty-four months. The median was eleven months. Six of the agen-

cies made placements in six months or less, while five averaged fifteen months or more. Agency personnel stressed the desirability of placing a child while motivation of the applicants is high. It was pointed out that a long waiting period tends to decrease motivation and increase anxiety.

Some agencies use a period of preparation based on the nine-month model of natural gestation. Others were critical of this practice and felt that the two situations are not analogous.

Group meetings were a common method of procedure. They were used in twenty agencies and branches of two others. Thirteen agencies and some branches of another screened by means of telephone interviews. Apparently only one agency conducted detailed intake-type interviews by telephone. One used a questionnaire on the basis of which the agency selected applicants who would have intake interviews.

All agencies sought information from references regularly, usually *after* tentative selection of the applicants. This was often the last step before placement. Twelve agencies used personal interviews, seven most typically used letters, and two agencies used telephone calls. The remainder used a combination of methods. Some agencies regarded their contacts with persons who were named as references as a public relations technique and felt that no helpful material concerning the client was derived.

Agencies typically regarded the first interview as an opportunity to identify promising applicants. In the process all but one of the agencies terminated contact with some applicants following one interview. Three of the agencies said that after one interview they eliminated only those showing gross pathology. One agency conducted a series of three interviews for all applicants unless they withdrew.

In eleven of the agencies, caseworkers' decisions in the selection of adoptive parents following the intake interview were reviewed by a supervisor. Six agencies reported review by a committee of agency personnel and ten use both methods.

The total number of interviews in a complete home study averages six. The range was from four to ten. All agencies had at least one interview in the home, as well as interviews with husband and wife separately.

In eighteen agencies only one interview was held in the home, but two agencies routinely held five or more there.

All but seven agencies reported that they were *selecting* parents after fewer interviews and using casework more to help develop capacity for adoptive parenthood.<sup>3</sup> This method was preferred because it helps applicants reduce tension about being accepted and makes supportive casework more successful.

#### **Areas of Marked Differences**

Three areas showed great differences in practice. One concerns importance of and use of infertility data. Some agencies require a medical study by a physician selected by the agency. Others require that a specialist selected by the couple make a report on forms provided by the agency, and still others that a general practitioner make a statement about the condition as part of the physical examination form. Some agencies regarded a certain period of childless marriage as *prima facie* evidence of infertility and use the sterility study mainly as an indication of motivation.

When no physical reason was found for childlessness, some agencies had a longer period of home study, some used psychiatric consultation, and some did not differentiate. There seemed to be little consistency either in philosophy or practice. In the agencies that have made no distinction in practice between so-called functional and organic infertility, a follow-up study to determine incidence of natural children born after adoption as well as an evaluation of comparative parental competence would be of interest.

The other major differences were in policies on number of children placed with a couple, and on placement with couples who already had children of their own. Agency differences were marked on these matters and were related only in part to supply and demand.

It is clear that use of group meetings, earlier selection of applicants, a short period between initial contact and placement, and placement of a child at the earliest age consistent with circumstances were characteristic of adoption practice in the agencies studied.

<sup>3</sup> See Donald Brieland, "Research in Adoption," *Child Welfare*, March 1959, p. 4, for further comment. Reprints available.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEAGUE'S SALARY SURVEY

Yetta H. Appel

Research Associate  
Child Welfare League of America

PREVAILING salary levels are being recognized as having a significant bearing on the recruitment and retention of able people for the field of social work. Unless financial compensation is commensurate with the professional education, skill and experience essential in social work, recruitment for the field will be greatly handicapped.<sup>1</sup> In addition, retaining experienced and skilled practitioners will become more difficult. William Tollen, for example, reports low salary levels as a significant reason for staff turnover in child welfare and family service agencies.<sup>2</sup>

The last survey of salary trends in League member agencies was made in December 1954. In view of the upward trend of salaries since that time, a review of current salaries and salary practices seemed necessary if not overdue. Accordingly, 209 agencies (state departments of public welfare in League membership were not included) were requested to participate in a survey of salaries and related practices as of November 1, 1958.<sup>3</sup> A full report will be ready shortly. This is a statement of highlights of this survey.

In conducting the survey, we were mindful of staff problems faced by the whole field of

<sup>1</sup> See report of NASW, *Personnel Information*, Vol. II, No. 1, January 1959.

<sup>2</sup> William Tollen, "Report of Study of Staff Losses in Child Welfare and Family Service Agencies with Special Reference to Reasons for Resignation," address given at Biennial Meeting, Family Service Association of America, Washington, D.C., April 2, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> Positions studied included executive director, assistant executive director, director of casework, department or division head, district office supervisor, resident supervisor or director of institution, director of nursery or day care center, group work supervisor or recreation director, supervisor of houseparents, supervisor, assistant supervisor, senior caseworker, case worker, junior caseworker, case aide, group or activity worker, day care teacher, houseparent-counselor; agency experience in utilizing the services of psychologists, psychiatrists and physicians was also studied.

social work and the field of child welfare in particular. Together with other professions, social work recognizes that higher entrance salaries are needed to compete favorably for the group of undergraduates we want to attract. But it may not be as widely recognized that the salary that one can achieve after ten years in the field is as significant, if not more so, than the entrance salary. If, as will be shown, salary levels are not commensurate with continued professional development and increasing responsibility, does not this seriously handicap efforts to both attract and retain individuals with potentiality for social work?

The current survey reveals that, on the whole, the salary levels of top and "middle level" positions in member agencies have declined in comparison with the advance in the salary level for the position of caseworker.<sup>4</sup> This means that the differentials between beginning casework salaries and those for administrative and supervisory positions have diminished. Any one of the administrative positions studied would illustrate this, but the positions of executive director and director of casework have been chosen as examples since they represent two key positions carrying major responsibility for the development and the quality of services offered by agencies.

## The Executive Director

For the position of executive director it was found that the maximum salaries in the 166 voluntary agencies ranged from as little as \$5,000 a year to \$20,000, with a national

<sup>4</sup> Of the total group of 209 agencies, 196 or 94 percent responded. Since the data from two agencies could not be utilized, the report is based on a total of 194 agencies, broken down as follows: 166 are voluntary family and children's agencies; sixteen, voluntary agencies that offer day care exclusively; and twelve, public-local agencies.

median maximum salary of \$9,000.<sup>5</sup> Further, it was found that a third of the executive directors earn a maximum salary of \$8,000 or less per year, another third between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per year and a relatively small group, 16 percent, report a maximum salary of over \$12,000. Cognizant of the factor of an agency's size in the determination of executive salaries we analyzed the maximum salaries for this position according to the size of the professional staff, and found that no executive director with a staff of six or more was earning below \$5,000.<sup>6</sup> There is almost a direct relationship between size of professional staff and executive salaries. But the salaries appear inadequate generally. Of those executive directors administering agencies with professional staffs of twenty-one and over, less than half receive a maximum salary of \$12,000 or over.

The top salary reported, \$20,000, has not changed since 1954. The current median maximum salary of \$9,000 represents a 34 percent increase over the median salary reported in the 1954 survey. However the 1954 figure represented the actual salaries received by executive directors at that time, while the salaries in our current survey represent prevailing ranges and some of the executive directors are not yet at the top of the range. Therefore the median of the actual salaries received by these voluntary agency executives in 1958 would probably be somewhat lower.

### ***The Director of Casework***

The same pattern appears to obtain for the position of director of casework in voluntary agencies. Almost three-fourths of the persons holding such positions earn maximum salaries of \$8,000 or less with the largest proportion, more than half, in the \$6,001 to \$8,000 range. The median maximum salary is \$7,500, which represents a 30 percent increase over the 1954 median of the actual salaries.<sup>7</sup> Of all the casework positions

<sup>5</sup> Minimum and maximum salaries, or the range, were requested for all positions. The median minimum salary gives an average for the beginning salaries, and the median maximum salary is an average of the highest prevailing salaries.

<sup>6</sup> But the existence of such a low maximum salary for as responsible a position as that of executive director, even for a small agency, is disturbing.

<sup>7</sup> As for the position of executive director, this increase is also somewhat inflated.

covered by the two surveys, this one registers the smallest increase. Moreover when the top 1954 and 1958 salaries for the position are compared there has been only a \$500 increase, from \$9,480 to \$10,000. In other words, no director of casework in a voluntary agency can earn more than \$10,000 per year.

### ***The Caseworker***

In contrast, the median maximum salary for the position of professionally trained caseworker is \$5,900. This is the salary earned by a caseworker who has been in the field about four to five years. Maximum salaries range from \$4,500 to \$8,000. In 1954, the highest salary reported was \$6,600. While in 1954 there was a difference of \$1,824 between median salaries for caseworker and director of casework, in 1958 there was only a \$1,600 differential, a decrease of \$200. This \$1,600 differential also holds for the median minimum salaries reported for these positions. For the caseworker with a social work degree we found a median minimum salary of \$4,500; and for the director of casework, \$6,024.

It seems clear that prevailing salaries generally are low. But since salary scales for more responsible positions are built upon the beginning salary, a low entrance salary will tend to depress salaries as a whole. In this connection it should be recognized that the median maximum salary given for the professionally trained caseworker represents the outer limit of the salaries for this position rather than what most of the caseworkers in our survey may be earning at present.

### ***Increment Policies***

Another important factor to be considered in comparing the salary levels for the position of caseworker and the administrative positions is the matter of increment policies and their implementation. It was found that 41 percent of the directors of casework and 63 percent of the executive directors of voluntary agencies did not have a salary range. This was much less true for the position of caseworker. The salary levels for the former two positions are therefore more stationary and in time become depressed while caseworkers have achieved advances

in salary. It would appear to be of some importance not only to achieve more adequate salary levels but also to revise the increment policies for the key administrative positions. The individuals in these positions are responsible for maintaining high qualitative standards. If they continue to receive remuneration not commensurate with their responsibilities, agencies will find it increasingly difficult to serve their communities efficiently.

A further word needs to be said about increment policies generally reported by the member agencies who responded. It was found that 58 percent of the agencies either have no provision for annual increments, or increments are voted by the board of directors and/or determined by the local community chest annually. This is the practice even in some agencies with established salary scales for the various positions. This means that practitioners who are evaluated satisfactorily or who continue to perform satisfactorily cannot always be sure that they will receive the expected increase. A number of agencies reported that if fund goals fall short salaries are "frozen." This poses serious problems in maintaining staff morale, and raises questions about agency budgeting and financial operation. It would seem to have implications for recruitment as well.

Another interesting increment policy highlighted by our survey is that 42 percent of the agencies require a yearly evaluation, before increments are given. But a number of these agencies indicated that this evaluation requirement is not routinely followed. In addition 40 percent of the agencies indicated that increments for their professional staff are "automatic" as long as there is continued satisfactory performance after the probationary period. We understand this to mean that a staff member does have to wait for a formal evaluation prior to receiving his annual increment. The practice of having increments directly dependent upon the formal yearly evaluation, especially for casework personnel, is being questioned widely. It is felt that the decision to grant an increase does not belong basically in the supervisory relationship and may unduly complicate the supervisory process. At present

League member agencies report no clear trend regarding this practice.

### **Relation Between Training and Salary**

Throughout the country in every major city campaigns are being conducted to interest undergraduates in graduate social work education. The relationship between the required training and salary levels may well provide one of the more important incentives for candidates undertaking such education. With this in mind, the salary level for the position of caseworker with a social work degree was compared with that of the partly-trained<sup>8</sup> and untrained caseworker. These comparisons were made for the voluntary agencies where a greater proportion of caseworkers are fully trained.<sup>9</sup>

When the minimum salary ranges for these three categories of personnel are compared we find that they all begin at \$3,500 or under, but the highest minimum salary, between \$5,501 and \$6,000, is reported for the fully-trained caseworker. The highest minimum salary listed for the partly-trained caseworker is \$5,500 and for the untrained caseworker, \$5,000. In short, in some agencies less well-trained people are paid the same or higher salaries than are fully professionally trained caseworkers in other agencies. The median minimum salaries for the three groups of caseworkers are, respectively, \$4,500, \$4,000 and \$3,800.

Obviously, there is a relatively small salary differential between the caseworkers with full professional training and those with only partial training. One also wonders, in view of the investment involved in securing a professional education, if \$700 is a sufficient differential between the untrained caseworker and the caseworker with a graduate social work degree. But it is not a question of lowering the salaries of the former which are comparable to salaries earned by unskilled labor. Rather, a truly adequate entrance salary for the professionally qualified caseworker should be established.

It should be noted, however, that maximum salaries give more recognition to pro-

<sup>8</sup> *Partly trained* is defined as having about a year of graduate social work education.

<sup>9</sup> Of a total of 166 voluntary agencies only eighty-one and thirty-three agencies, respectively, reported that they employed partly-trained and untrained caseworkers, as well as caseworkers with social work degrees.

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essional education. The median maximum salaries for the untrained caseworker and the caseworker with a graduate social work degree are, respectively, \$4,200 and \$5,900. The maximum salary ranges also reflect this greater differential in that the highest maximum salary reported for the untrained caseworker position was \$6,500, as compared with \$8,000 for the caseworker with a social work degree. There is much less of a difference between the partly-trained caseworker and the caseworker with a social work degree. The highest maximum salary reported for the former is \$7,500, only \$500 less than that for the fully trained caseworker, while the median maximum salary is \$5000 which is but \$900 less. It does seem a matter of some concern that there is not a greater differential between the partly-trained caseworker and the caseworker with a graduate degree. This may be a factor in our finding that partly-trained caseworkers represent 20 percent of the total group of caseworkers in the voluntary agencies.

It should be emphasized that the employment of partly-trained caseworkers represents the compromise which many agencies need to make in view of the difficulty in securing caseworkers with full professional training. This compromise in turn presents another dilemma, in that it tends to perpetuate a fairly large group of workers in the field who do not ever secure a graduate social work degree. In the family of professions (e.g. law, medicine, teaching) opportunities for individuals to circumvent basic professional training is almost unheard of. Such practices tend to lower the status of a profession. The commitment of the field to professional social work education as a prerequisite must be sufficiently strong to encourage the achievement of this goal and the institution of a salary scale which is commensurate with professional status. The proposal of the NASW for a \$5,400 minimum salary for a professionally trained caseworker, that would double in ten years, seems to incorporate this conviction.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Salary Data for Public-Local Agencies**

We analyzed separately the salary levels in the twelve public-local agencies that responded. There is a tendency to think of public agencies in a stereotyped fashion,

namely, that their salary levels for comparable positions are lower, and that their staff on the whole is less well trained. To a large extent, the data refutes this thinking, at least for these agencies who are in League membership. For all of the administrative positions that it was possible to compare, with one exception, we have found higher median maximum salaries in the public-local agencies. Representative examples are director of casework with a median maximum salary of \$8,620 as compared with \$7,500 in the voluntary agencies; department or division head with a median maximum salary of \$8,244 in the public-local agencies and \$7,745 in the voluntary.

The one exception is that of executive director. Three-fourths of the public-local agencies have professional staffs of fifty or more. Their executive directors appear to be quite inadequately remunerated when compared with the executive directors of voluntary agencies with a similar number of staff members. The median maximum salary for this latter group of executive directors is \$14,000 whereas for the public-local group of executives it is only \$10,332.

In addition, the administrative staff is almost completely professionally trained. Somewhat unexpectedly, we also find in some of these administrative positions, that the degree of professional training is higher in the public-local agencies than in the voluntary agencies. This may be due, in part, to the emphasis in public agencies on having fully trained administrative staff to counteract the effect of the greater proportion of untrained casework staff.

Particular interest was paid to the salary levels for the position of caseworker in the voluntary and public-local agencies, respectively. A higher median entrance salary, \$4,710, was found for the beginning caseworker with a social work degree in the public-local agencies. As previously noted, the median beginning salary in the voluntary agencies is \$4,500. Median maximum salaries for this position are equivalent, \$5,900 in the voluntary agencies and \$5,910 in the public-local. Salary levels, not unexpectedly, are also higher for the partly-trained and untrained caseworker in the public-local agencies; the median maximum salary for the

<sup>10</sup> NASW, *Personnel Information*, Vol. II, No. 1, January 1959.

partly-trained caseworker is \$5,115 and \$4,794 for the untrained caseworker. The greater dependence of the public-local agencies on partly-trained and untrained casework staff is reflected in these higher salary levels, as well as in the lesser differentiation between the caseworkers with full professional training and those with partial training.

It should also be noted that in these public-local agencies increments tend to be given more regularly and automatically as compared with the voluntary agencies. Perhaps this practice is one of the factors responsible for the improvement in the salary levels of these agencies.

### **Unfilled Positions**

Information was also requested on the number of supervisory and casework staff vacancies in member agencies. Sixteen percent report one or more supervisory vacancies; 51 percent, one or more casework vacancies. In the voluntary agencies, the supervisory vacancies represent 11.9 percent of the total number of budgeted supervisory positions, whereas in the public-local agencies it is 5 percent. This seems to indicate that a somewhat greater mobility may be characteristic of the supervisory staff in voluntary agencies.

Casework vacancies, we find, represent 13 percent of the total number of budgeted casework positions in the voluntary agencies, as compared with 9 percent in the public-local. Both these groups of agencies appear to have fairly serious staffing problems as regards caseworkers. In this connection, it is pertinent to note that there appears to be some relationship between regional salary levels and the percent of casework vacancies. The Southern region, which has the lowest median maximum salary for caseworkers, has the highest percentage of casework vacancies, 15 percent, whereas the South Pacific region, with a median maximum salary slightly above the national median for caseworkers, has the lowest percentage, 4½ percent. This seems to underscore the inter-relationship of salary levels, staff shortages and recruitment.

### **Day Care Agencies**

For the day care agencies, which were analyzed separately, the concern over the

consistently low salaries seems well founded, and the limited use of casework service as an integral part of day care is also revealed. The median maximum salary for the executive director of a day care agency is \$5,950. In only one day care agency is the remuneration of the executive comparable with that of executive directors of voluntary agencies of similar size. The salaries of the day care agency executive directors tend to be among the lowest reported. It would follow that salary levels for positions below that of executive director in these agencies would also be depressed. For example, the median maximum salary for a branch director of a nursery or day care center is \$4,550. On the whole, the professional training in social work and/or early childhood education for the directors of day care agencies is limited. It may be that salary levels in this field will tend to increase with the improvement of the qualifications of day care staff.

Only nine of the sixteen day care agencies have casework staff, and in about half of these the casework personnel is either partly trained or untrained. In those day care agencies where the casework staff is professionally trained, however, their salaries are invariably among the lowest listed for their respective positions. Obviously, such salary levels will tend to mitigate against the greater utilization of casework personnel which is deemed necessary.

Generally, one is impressed by the low prevailing salaries for almost all of the positions surveyed in 1958. In this connection, the 1958 report of the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics,<sup>11</sup> of the University of California at Berkeley is pertinent. Since 1920, this committee has consistently compiled data regarding the amount of money a family of four (two children) needs, to live in the "commonly accepted" fashion. For 1958, they estimated that to live modestly a wage earner renting a home would need to earn \$6,087; a wage earner owning his home, \$6,435; and a salaried junior professional, \$9,203 (a salary attainable primarily by executive directors according to our survey). It would seem apparent that if

<sup>11</sup> The Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics of the University of California at Berkeley, *Quantity and Cost Budgets for Two Income Levels*, September, 1958. Issued by the committee.

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more people, but men particularly, are to be recruited into the field, salary levels will need to keep pace with the rising standard of living.

Although the prevailing salary levels are low in relation to cost of living indices, it should be recognized that gains have been made since 1954. A fairly large number of agencies report salary scales for casework positions, for example, above the median salaries. Some of these scales also approximate recommended salary levels for these positions. One such significant recommendation is found in the 1956 Cleveland study.<sup>12</sup> This project, it may be recalled, was an unprecedented, commendable attempt to establish salary levels for casework positions which would more appropriately reflect the inherent worth of these positions. One of their recommendations which seemed eminently sound was that the starting salary for a caseworker with an MS degree should be \$4,620. Though as noted above a number of agencies report such a salary, it is disconcerting to find in 1958 that this starting salary for caseworkers does not prevail in the majority of the member agencies. These agencies are not only currently at a disadvantage in competing for casework staff but also this disadvantage will be intensified if these salaries are not upgraded. Further, if the salary levels for supervisory and administrative positions remain stationary, retention of experienced staff will be difficult. It would seem that if salary levels in the child welfare field are not substantially improved, the gap between the need for staff and the availability of professionally qualified practitioners and allied personnel will become critical.

<sup>12</sup> Welfare Federation of Cleveland, *Pricing Casework Jobs*, Report of the Casework Council, November 1956.



### Playhouse 90 Program

We have received several letters and comments, representing a variety of opinions, about the Playhouse 90 program "In Lonely Expectation," presented on April 2 by CBS after consultation with the League. Since the comments were received just as this issue of CHILD WELFARE was going to press, we are planning to discuss them in the next issue.

## BOOK NOTES

**The Stormy Decade: Adolescence**, by George J. Mohr, M.D., and Marian A. Despres, Ph.D. New York: Random House, Inc., 1958. 264 pp., \$3.95.

This is a psychoanalytically oriented approach, of Freudian persuasion, to the period of adolescence; it combines the work of a psychiatrist and a psychologist. The book is divided into four parts, dealing with personality structure and growth (beginning "before birth" and covering the preadolescent period in general); adolescent development; mental health problems of the adolescent; and mental hygiene suggestions. Case histories illustrate the conclusions presented. The details emphasized are those of interest chiefly to the therapist, engrossed in the immediate task of affecting some adjustment in behavior.

This is essentially the kind of book that grows out of experience in attempted therapy, dealing with the related forces that are immediately available to the therapist. Thus the family setting of the adolescent is interpreted chiefly in terms of the mother and, to a lesser extent, of the father. There is little or no conception of the family as a household involving other persons. Our own studies at the William T. Carter Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania, based on several thousand cases, indicate that close to three-fourths of the children, even in middle- and upper-class families, come from homes in which other persons have lived, at least for considerable periods of time, before the child's tenth year. From reading the book under review, it would appear that there are no grandparents, aunts, uncles, other siblings or domestics participating in the daily, repetitive and intimate interaction of the household. Nor do families have guests, a factor in child behavior which our own studies have indicated as of such importance, especially in selected cases.

There is no reference to the role of social class status and differences, shown in the work of Hollingshead, Havighurst, Tabu and others to be of great importance in the adolescent years. Even a casual perusal of their work would modify many of the judgments presented in this volume.

The reader who speculates about the American adolescent, and seeks to see him in

perspective with the adolescents in other cultures, will find only bowing references to the comparative studies by the cultural anthropologists (only nine lines given to the work of Margaret Mead), and but little emphasis upon their basic significance.

There is a separate chapter on the adolescent peer group, including reference to the role of the gang, and another chapter on juvenile delinquency, with inclusion of gang emphasis. The work of Thrasher and the Gluecks is mentioned in passing, but not Cohen's very helpful study, *Delinquent Boys*. Peer groups are presented primarily as an element in the psychiatric framework, such as a way of helping the adolescent "overcome the deep sense of guilt that results from hostile feelings toward his family." There is no mention of the problems of southern rural Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican or other adolescents, suddenly catapulted into the maelstrom of our metropolitan centers.

For the psychiatrically oriented therapist, this book will come as an interesting and confirming contribution; to other students of adolescence, its usefulness is rather limited.

JAMES H. S. BOSSARD

*The William T. Carter Foundation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.*

**Concepts and Methods of Social Work**, edited by Walter A. Friedlander. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958, 308 pp., \$4.50.

The bulk of this book is devoted to a presentation of the concepts and principles of the three methods of social work practice—casework, group work, and community organization. Each of these methods is presented in one large chapter. An introductory chapter covers generic principles of social work, and a concluding chapter deals with social welfare administration and research. Both of these are written by Professor Walter Friedlander, the editor.

This is an attempt to bring together and present in relatively succinct and non-technical fashion what the authors consider basic concepts and principles of social work methods. This is an ambitious undertaking. This reader, in several instances, gained the impression that specificity and comprehen-

siveness had to be sacrificed to "popularity." Nevertheless, the book contains many a formulation that is worth pondering, and represents in many respects a conceptual advance. For the sophisticated reader who knows social work it can serve as a stimulant to further and better formulations. This reviewer rather doubts that it will give an accurate and appropriate picture of social work to the interested layman or the reader from another field.

The chapter on casework, written by Professor Henry Maas of the University of California in Berkeley in a lucid and well-integrated fashion, represents a number of key concepts of social casework as they are conceived by Professor Maas. I would agree with most of Professor Maas's formulations, but I do not think that the author has succeeded in presenting a conceptual system which covers casework practice in its entirety. The concepts of social role, mode of adaptation, and ego functioning which are represented (the first two better than the third) constitute but a fragment of social casework. A comprehensive system of casework would require such concepts as problem, client and agency, and an examination of casework as a method as well as a process with careful delineation of the professional relationship. Furthermore, more attention to the concept of stress and its relationship to problem creation would seem to be required.

The chapter on group work written by Professor Gisela Konopka of the University of Minnesota is easily the most "folksy" of the three main chapters of the book. The major part of this chapter purports to deal with goals and purposes of social group work and the theory underlying the group work method. This part of the chapter seems to apply with equal pertinence to other methods of social work and to social work in general; hence it cannot be considered specific for the group work method. The last section of the chapter does deal specifically with group work as a method of social work, and spell out the principles of this method. Although the group work method is well illustrated in the analysis of a group record, the theoretical references draw upon but again do not seem to be specific for group work. They do not parallel in any way the material in the

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chapter on casework, or approximate it in conceptual acuity.

In the chapter on community organization by Dr. Genevieve E. Carter of the Welfare Federation of Los Angeles, we see a return to conceptual formulation. The activities of the community organization worker are well categorized, in itself an accomplishment of no mean proportion. An attempt is made to factor out the characteristics of community organization which differentiate it from the methods of casework and group work. While not as lucid nor as well organized as the chapter on casework, this chapter probably does a good deal for the progress of theory development in community organization. All of its elements are presented, even though they are not and perhaps cannot yet be placed into a conceptual system. Dr. Carter does not hesitate to identify procedures and situation where, in her opinion, the community organization method might be in conflict with general social work values. The chapter also identifies areas of knowledge basic to community organization. This reviewer does not think that knowledge of social institution and of the community is needed only by a community organizer, but by all social workers. From the point of view of comprehensiveness and conceptual consistency, this reviewer considers the chapter on community organization the best in the book.

In all three chapters, the application of theoretical content is demonstrated through illustrations from actual practice, a feature which greatly enhances the usefulness of this book.

The introductory chapter enunciates basic values of social work and then proceeds to identify the goal of social work. Not everybody would agree with Professor Friedlander's formulation that the goal of social work is to reconcile the well being of individuals with the welfare of society in which they live (page 8). Some would balk at the idea of reconciliation, and many would not consider this formulation as sufficiently specific to distinguish the endeavors of social work as a profession from those of other professions.

The last chapter, entitled "Social Welfare Administration and Research," consists of

fourteen pages of text. Four are devoted to "generic aspects of social work practice," and the remaining ten deal with administration and research as "techniques" facilitating social work practice. Surely even a person of Professor Friedlander's capacity to generalize cannot rightly claim that the characteristics of research and administration can be done justice to in so little space, or that the thorny issue of the common elements of social work practice can be treated anywhere nearly adequately in four pages. Perhaps this last chapter reflects a basic flaw in the design of the whole book; it attempted too much in too small a space, and created for itself the impossible task of trying to combine the goals of theoretical and popular presentation.

Nevertheless the book contains many a novel idea, and has made some excellent conceptual contributions to the development of methods theory in social work. For this reason, it will be of most use to the skeptical student of the profession.

WERNER W. BOEHM

*School of Social Work, University of Minnesota*



**Religion in Child Adoption**, by the National Women's Conference, American Ethical Union, 2 W. 64th St., New York, N. Y. 10 cents.

This is a brief survey of conflicts that arise from opposing positions of various religious groups in American society and their effect on adoption practices. Representative views of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths are presented, as well as views of lawyers, judges and social workers.

The authors of this pamphlet take the following stand:

"There is an absence of statistics to show how many otherwise eligible children are deprived of adoption on religious grounds alone, although there seems to be tacit agreement on the part of many workers in the field that it is a considerable number. Regardless of whether this number is large or small, it is our contention that members of minority religious groups, couples of mixed marriages, the many unchurched Americans, providing that they meet all other standards, deserve equal opportunity to adopt children openly, without having to profess a religion to which they do not honestly subscribe, through legitimate adoption channels. In this area, as in any other, there should be no discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs."

## CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL OPENINGS

Classified personnel advertisements are inserted at the rate of 15 cents per word; boxed ads \$7.50 per inch; minimum insertion \$3.00. Deadline for acceptance or cancellation of ads is eighth of month preceding month of publication. Ads listing box numbers or otherwise not identifying the agency are accepted only when accompanied by statement that person currently holding the job knows ad is being placed.

**TUCSON, ARIZONA**—Supervising caseworker, qualified, experienced, for small children's agency providing child placement in foster home care, group care, adoption service, services to unmarried parents. Psychiatric consultation. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Executive Director, Arizona Children's Home Association, P.O. Box 7277, Tucson, Ariz.

**SOCIAL WORKER.** Opportunity to develop a certificate program for residential child-care workers at the University of California in Los Angeles and San Francisco areas. Two vacancies as of July 1. Qualifications desired: MSW, institutional and teaching experience. Salary up to \$7500. If interested write: Eva Schindler (Los Angeles Area), School of Social Welfare, Los Angeles; Gertrude Wilson (San Francisco Area), School of Social Welfare, Berkeley.

**SUPERVISOR - CASEWORKER.** For small multi-service children's agency. Supervise 3 caseworkers and carry 10 to 15 children in institution. Requires 2 years' training and 3 years' subsequent experience in children's agency, preferably involving some experience with disturbed children. Beginning salary \$6300; approved range to \$7500. Laurance Hollingshead, Director, Sacramento Children's Home, 2750 Sutterville Rd., Sacramento 20, Calif.

**MEN AND WOMEN CHILD WELFARE SERVICES WORKERS and SUPERVISORS.** Public agency with broad program of special services to children offering many promotional opportunities needs caseworkers and supervisors with at least 1 year of graduate work and appropriate child welfare experience. Salaries: Child Welfare Service Worker \$438-\$483; Senior Child Welfare Services Worker \$483-\$532; Child Welfare Supervisor \$483-\$559; Child Welfare Section Chief \$507-\$587. For complete job description and application write to County Personnel, 403 Civic Center, San Diego, Calif.

**CHILD WELFARE WORKERS,** San Francisco Bay area, California. Requires 3 years' child placement experience or 1 year's graduate social work training, \$395-\$481 a month. Or 1 year's graduate study plus 2 years' experience or 2 years' graduate study, \$436-\$530 a month. Large progressive welfare department. Immediate vacancies. Written civil service examination given in your locale. Alameda County Civil Service, 12th and Jackson, Oakland 7, Calif.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.** Responsibility for comprehensive services in 42-bed residence for unmarried mothers. Psychiatric consultations. MSW, administrative and supervisory experience required. Salary open. Send qualifications to president, Florence Crittenton Home, 850 Broderick St., San Francisco 15. Interviews at time of national conference possible.

**CHILD WELFARE SERVICES WORKERS** for fast growing southern California county. Opportunities in adoption unit included. WORKER I (\$4650-\$5520) requires 1 year of graduate study in social work. WORKER II (\$5004-\$5796) requires 1 year of graduate study in social work and at least 1 year's experience. Highly qualified professional supervision. Paid vacation and sick leave, part-paid health insurance, other benefits. County Personnel, 236 Third St., San Bernardino, Calif.

**CHILD WELFARE WORKERS and SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS:** San Francisco Public Welfare Department has immediate openings in both classifications. Civil Service examination given in your locale. Child Welfare Worker requires 2 years' graduate study or 1 year with 2 years' experience—\$450-\$540. Social Service Worker requires 1 year's graduate study or one year's experience—\$405-\$485. Civil Service Commission Room 154, City Hall, San Francisco, Calif.

**CASEWORKER II and CASEWORK SPECIALIST** in child placement agency. Service includes intensive casework with deeply troubled parents and children, placement in full-time and day care homes. Controlled case loads, regular psychiatric consultation. Excellent personnel practices, Social Security, retirement, health insurance. Caseworker II requirements: MSW and potential of being creative. Salary \$4836-\$6036. Casework specialist requirements: MSW, experience in casework and community organization activity. The casework specialist carries, in addition to a case load, considerable administrative responsibility for the particular service or program to which he has been assigned. Salary \$5400-\$6756. Clyde S. Pritchard, Executive Secretary, Children's Bureau of Los Angeles, 2824 Hyans St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.

**LOS ANGELES**—Openings for two caseworkers with graduate training in expanding family and child welfare agency—multiple services including marital counseling, unmarried parents, financial assistance, child placement in foster home care and group care, psychiatric consultation. Highly qualified supervision. Standard personnel practices. Opportunities for advancement. Salary, \$4836-\$6656 depending on training and experience. Write: Rev. William J. Barry, Assistant Director, Catholic Welfare Bureau, 855 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 17, Calif.

**CASEWORKER** of supervisory caliber for newly developed maternity home. Good personnel standards. Psychiatric consultation. Required: MSW with experience, preferably in unmarried mother field. \$5500-\$7000. Social Security and retirement. Located Fairfield County, 70 minutes from New York. Write: Executive Director, Woodfield Village, 1899 Stratfield Rd., Bridgeport 4, Conn.

**CASEWORKER** for adoption unit in small multiple-function agency. Good personnel practices, psychiatric consultation. Social Security and retirement plan. Required: MSW, experience, preferably in adoption. Salary \$5000-\$6700. Write: Executive Director, Woodfield Village, 1899 Stratfield Rd., Bridgeport 4, Conn.